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ABSTRACT

This book examines the impact of school vouchers and charter schools on three urban school districts, exploring the causes of behaviors observed and explaining how the structure of competition will likely shape the future of public education. The book draws on case studies from three districts at the center of the school choice debate: Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Cleveland, Ohio; and Edgewood, Texas. The study found that the three school districts did not respond to competition by emphasizing productivity or efficiency. Instead, under pressure to provide evidence of response, administrators tended to expand public relations efforts and chip holes in the rules and procedures that regulate public sector organizations. Inefficient practices were not rooted out, but some rules and procedures that protect employees and vocal constituencies were relaxed. The nine chapters are: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "The Market and the Urban Public School System"; (3) "Urban Systems as Competitors"; (4) "Milwaukee, 1989-95: Prologue"; (5) "Milwaukee, 1995-99: Hints of the Pickax"; (6) "Cleveland, 1995-99: Muffled by the Din"; (7) "Edgewood, 1998-2000: An Outside Invasion"; (8) "A Political Market"; and (9) "You Say You Want a Revolution?" (Contains approximately 220 references.) (SM)

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